

Message Text

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50

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 SCS-03 SAM-01 SAB-01

OMB-01 A-01 EB-07 OPR-02 OC-05 CCO-00 SCA-01 SY-05

SCCT-01 AID-05 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

CU-02 /107 W

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O R 291117Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4539

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USCINCEUR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6779

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT PGOV LE

SUBJECT: LEBANON SITUATION REPORT AS OF 0900Z, MAY 29

REF: BEIRUT 6751 (NOTAL)

1. MOST AREAS OF BEIRUT RELATIVELY QUIET THIS MORNING, BUT GOL SECURITY AUTHORITIES ARE CAUTIONING POPULACE TO AVOID QARANTINA AND TARIQ JADIDEH AREAS WHERE TENSIONS REMAIN HIGH AND SOME FIRING CONTINUES. DESPITE REDUCED LEVEL OF FIGHTING GENERALLY, ARMED ELEMENTS IN QARANTINA (REPORTEDLY LEBANESE LEFTISTS REINFORCED BY PFLP, PFLP-GC AND ALF) OPENED HEAVY WEAPONS FIRE (ROCKETS AND MORTARS) ON PRE-DOMINANTLY-CHRISTIAN ASHRAFIYEH QUARTER AT ABOUT 20,0Z LAST NIGHT AND KEPT IT UP UNTIL EARLY MORNING. RESIDENTS OF ASHRAFIYEH TO WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN DESCRIBE NIGHT AS "AWFUL." OFFICIAL GOL SOURCES PLACE CASUALTIES OVERNIGHT AT SIX DEAD AND 15 WOUNDED, WITH EXPECTATION THAT LIST WILL GROW AS MORE ACCURATE REPORTS ARE RECEIVED.

2. THERE WERE ALSO REPORTS OF HEAVY EXPLOSIONS OVERNIGHT IN RAOUCHE SECTION OF RAS BEIRUT. WE UNABLE DETERMINE AT MOMENT SOURCE OF THESE EXPLOSIONS WHICH SOME INFORMANTS CLAIM WERE CAUSED BY ROVING BANDS ATTEMPTING TO AGGRAVATE SITUATION. ADDITIONAL EXPLOSIONS WERE ALSO REPORTED IN EASTERN SUBURB OF HAZMIEH. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND DANGER OF ISOLATED SNIPERS PERSISTS IN SOME OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS WHICH FOR MOST PART ARE QUIET. LOCAL POLICE HAVE BEEN MANNING SPECIAL OPERATION TO ROOT OUT SUCH SNIPERS, AND INTERIOR MINISTRY HAS REPEATEDLY ASKED PUBLIC TO REPORT SNIPER PRESENCE SO THAT SPECIAL POLICE TEAMS CAN DEAL WITH FRAUCS TIREURS-- USING FORCE IF NECESSARY.

3. DESPITE FOREGOING, LIFE IN MUCH OF BEIRUT APPEARS TO BE HESITATINGLY EDGING TOWARD NORMAL AS CITIZENRY GINGERLY TESTS
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THE WIND. MANY MORE SHOPS ARE OPENING, AND TRAFFIC IS HEAVIER THAN IT HAS BEEN FOR DAYS. GOL SOURCE, HOWEVER, CAUTIONS (AND WE CONCUR) THAT EVEN UNDER BEST CIRCUMSTANCES AT LEAST TEN DAYS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR "ROUTINE" CONDITIONS TO RETURN. SECURITY FORCES, INCLUDING POLICE ARMORED UNITS WHICH CAME UNDER ROCKET FIRE WHEN THEY ATTEMPTED TO QUELL LAST NIGHT'S OUTBREAK IN QARANTINA, ARE MUCH IN EVIDENCE ON ALL APPROACHES TO CITY WHERE CHECKPOINTS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED

AND METICULOUS SEARCHES OF INCOMING VEHICLES ARE BEING CONDUCTED. RELIABLE PRESS SOURCE TELLS US THAT STATIONARY ARMY UNITS HAVE ALSO BEEN INTRODUCED WITHOUT FANFARE TO BEEF UP SECURITY UNITS.

4. SO FAR AS WE AWARE, ALL AMCITS REMAIN SAFE AND AMERICAN COMMUNITY HAS REACTED WITH COMMENDABLE CALM. AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL, WHICH REOPENED QUIETLY YESTERDAY, REMAINS OPEN WITH ATTENDANCE GREATLY INCREASED TODAY. WE NOTE CAIRO MENA REPORT (FBIS JN281629Y) THAT NUMBER OF SUSPICIOUS "FOREIGNERS" HAVE BEEN ARRESTED. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION RE THIS REPORT NOR ANY INDICATION AMCITS INVOLVED. WE ARE BEGINNING RECEIVE REPORTS (LATEST FROM GERMAN COMMERCIAL ATTACHE) THAT ARMED MEN IN SOME AREAS USED CONFUSION AND ANXIETY DURING HEIGHT OF TROUBLE TO GO FROM DOOR-TO-DOOR EXTORTING MONEY FROM RESIDENTS. (DEPT WILL RECALL USE OF THIS TACTIC BY CERTAIN FEDAYEEN AND OTHER GROUPS DURING TROUBLED TIMES IN PAST.)

5. PRIMIN-DESIGNATE KARAME, WHO HAS CITED RESTORATION OF PEACE AND ORDER AS HIS FIRST OBJECTIVE, CONTINUED CONSULTATIONS TODAY FOR FORMATION OF NEW CABINET. SOURCE WHO SPOKE WITH KARAME LATE MAY 28 SAYS THAT KARAME HAS NOT RPT NOT MADE UP HIS MIND RE COMPOSITION OF CABINET AND THAT ANNOUNCEMENT OF CABINET WILL PROBABLY BE MADE MAY 30. WE UNDERSTAND THAT LEFTIST GROUPS AND THEIR CHIEF SPOKESMAN, KAMAL JUMBLATT, ARE UNHAPPY OVER KARAME'S "RECONCILIATION" WITH PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL DURING YESTERDAY'S MEETING WITH PRES FRANGIE (PARA 3 BEIRUT 6751) AND THAT ONE OF MAIN PROBLEMS WHICH KARAME FACES IN FORMATION CBINET IS TO RECONCILE INCLUSION PHILANGE IN CABINET WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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UNHAPPINESS JUMBLATT, BUT PARTICULARLY LEFTIST GROUPS HE LEADS, WITH PHALANGE. POSSIBLY RELATED IS COMMENT BY SAEB SALAM (KARAME ALLY) TO DCM THIS MORNING THAT SITUATION IS 80 PERCENT RESOLVED BUT THAT JUMBLATT "MIGHT BECOME A PROBLEM." GODLEY

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NNN

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